



Harnessing American Ingenuity

News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

3701 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203-1714

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 8, 2004

Contact: Thomas Goodwin
(703) 560-7875

ONE-YEAR COUNTDOWN TO GRAND CHALLENGE 2005

DARPA Publishes Rules, Issues Team Application Status Report

Arlington, VA, October 8, 2004 ... With one year to go until the much-anticipated second robotic vehicle competition in the desert Southwest, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today published rules for the event and issued a status report on team applications.

“One year from today, on October 8, 2005, Grand Challenge teams will help America take a giant step toward the goal of saving lives on the battlefield through robotics technology,” said Grand Challenge Program Manager Ron Kurjanowicz. “The Grand Challenge teams have been hard at work for months, and all are eager to win the prize and become famous.”

The rules governing the Grand Challenge, which are available at the official website, www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge, reflect suggestions made during the recent public comment period. “We recognize that our goal of a fully autonomous ground vehicle depends upon DARPA’s ability to reach out to a diverse group of individuals and organizations,” Kurjanowicz said. “By opening up the process and encouraging folks to give us their input, the entire community is invested in making this a success.”

As of October 7, 2004, DARPA has received 79 Grand Challenge applications from teams in 26 states. Many more applications are expected before the February 11, 2005, deadline.

Among the applicants so far:

- 3 high school teams;
- 10 teams from American colleges and universities;
- 33 teams that filed applications for the 2004 Grand Challenge; of these, 17 teams were 2004 semifinalists;
- 47 teams associated with smaller organizations, which Kurjanowicz said indicates “The Grand Challenge is indeed harnessing the grassroots ingenuity that makes our country a technological leader.”

The DARPA Grand Challenge is a field test over rugged desert terrain to accelerate research and development in autonomous robotic ground vehicles. This technology will help save American

(more)

lives on the battlefield. At the first DARPA Grand Challenge, held in March 2004, 15 vehicles operating autonomously attempted a 142-mile route through the Mojave Desert. Since no vehicle was able to complete the route, DARPA is hosting this second Grand Challenge event.

DARPA has doubled the prize offered for successful completion of the DARPA Grand Challenge; \$2 million will be awarded to the team whose vehicle successfully completes the 2005 route the fastest within a 10-hour period.

-END-

DARPA is the central research and development organization for the U.S. Department of Defense. The Agency manages basic and applied research and development projects for DoD and pursues research in technology areas where the risk and payoff are both very high and where success may provide dramatic advances for traditional military roles and missions.